

Dr. Albert C. Hall
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Intelligence)
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Al:

Your letter of 8 April asks for my views concerning two suggestions for increasing CIA participation in the Community On-Line Intelligence System (COINS).

One of the suggestions is to assign two full-time CIA representatives to the COINS Project Management Office, one for NPIC and the other for the CIA Headquarters elements. Our review of this matter shows that the present arrangements and points of contact are clearly adequate to meet the needs of our analysts in both locations at this time. This situation may change when the upgrading of COINS is more advanced and begins to have more impact on our activities. Until our analysts at Headquarters and at NPIC make greater use of the COINS data base or we anticipate a substantial increase in such use, I see no need for assigning full-time CIA representatives to the COINS Project Management Office.

The other suggestion is that we consider the possibility of using a computer at CIA for providing real-time access to CIA Headquarters files. Although we are not yet in a position to make a decision on this matter, I can assure you that we are considering this suggestion. Obviously, the effort involved in providing better community access to CIA files must be justified and shaped by a thoroughly developed concept of what files CIA can contribute to COINS in the future and the additional benefits and costs involved in real-time access to CIA-sponsored COINS files.

We have begun to take steps to get the information we need to make decisions about new COINS hardware at CIA. The CIA Subsystem Manager for COINS is conducting a survey of Agency components that will provide information not only about the present utility of COINS to CIA production analysts but also about any Agency plans for data bases that might usefully be made available to community analysts via COINS. The upcoming COINS workshops to be run by the MITRE Corporation should also provide new insight into how CIA participation in COINS can be made more effective.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby
Director